

REMARKS

Claims 1-62 were previously pending in this application. By this amendment, Applicant is canceling claims 1-10 and 37 without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 35 has been amended, and no new claims have been added. As a result, claims 11-36 and 38-62 are pending for examination with claims 11, 12, 16, 34, 35, 39, 61 and 62 being independent claims.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicants note with appreciation that on page 3 of the Office Action, claims 11-34, 39-41, 61-62 are allowed, and claims 37-38 and 42-60 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Applicants note that the Office Action Summary indicates that claim 12 is rejected. However, as stated above, on page 3 of the Office Action, claim 12 is indicated as allowed. The Applicants believe that it was intended that claim 12 was to be allowed. The Applicants proceed with this understanding.

While not acceding to the propriety of any claim rejections over prior art set forth in the Office Action, Applicants have rewritten some claims and canceled others solely to accept the subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner, so as to expedite the prosecution of this application towards allowance.

The subject matter of dependent claim 37, which was indicated as allowable, has been added to the subject matter of independent claim 35 from which it depends; thus, claims 35 and claims 36, 38 and 42-60, which depend from claim 35, are now in condition for allowance.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

The Office Action rejected claims 1, 10 and 35-36 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,410,150 to Teron (hereinafter Teron), and rejected claims 2-9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Teron.

The Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections. In any case, these rejections are rendered moot by the amendments and cancellations herein, which were made solely to expedite prosecution of this application toward allowance by accepting subject matter deemed

allowable by the Examiner. Applicants do not necessarily concede that the foregoing rejections are proper, and reserve the right to file one or more related applications directed to the subject matter of the claims prior to the amendments herein.

Information Disclosure Statements

The Applicants file herewith an attached information disclosure statement. The Applicants also point out that an IDS, dated January 9, 2004, appears to have already been considered by the Examiner; however, the Examiner has failed to initial each reference listed on the Form-1449 accompanying the January 9, 2004 IDS. Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to provide an appropriately initialed Form-1449 for the January 9, 2004 IDS in subsequent correspondence to the Applicant.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application should now be in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after this amendment, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicants' attorney at the telephone number listed below.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicants hereby request any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 50/2762.

Respectfully submitted,
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